



# Fuelling Fitness for Your Sport- Cricket

## About Cricket

- Cricket is played competitively in summer (indoor cricket may be played all year)
- Competition can last from 8 hours (one day match) to up to five days (Test match).
- Junior cricket is usually played over three hours with equal time allocated to each team with a short break as they swap over.

## Fluid Needs

- A cricket player can lose one Litre of fluid in an hour.
- Players competing in warm/humid conditions can lose more than twice this much.
- Moderate fluid losses can impair bowling accuracy in skilled cricket players.
- Fluid loss not only has an adverse effect on performance, it can also be extremely dangerous.
- Because cricket is often played in summer during the heat of the day, keeping the body cool and drinking adequate fluid is a priority.
- Training is the time to establish really good fluid replacement habits. Players can weigh themselves before and after innings (in a minimum of clothing) to estimate fluid losses. Every 0.5 kg lost is equivalent to at least 500ml of fluid lost.
- Losses need to be replaced before, during and after future sessions of play.
- Cricketers need to learn to drink well at drinks breaks and bowlers should get into the habit of having a drink bottle on the boundary and drink frequently between overs.
- Cool water should be available at all times and many players find sports drinks help performance.
- Recovery of fluid losses between days of play is also critical.

## Tips for Preventing Dehydration

1. Drink before you feel thirsty
2. Carry a drink bottle at all times
3. Keep a fluid chart to assess your fluid needs
4. Experiment with volumes and timing of fluid intake during training
5. Avoid alcohol in any form prior to and immediately after exercise
6. Drink regularly throughout training & games
7. Don't forget to replace fluid losses after each innings and day of play.



## **What Should I Eat Pre-Event?**

- Cricketers generally don't know when they will be required to perform, so a flexible pre and during play eating plan is required.
- Experiment with a variety of foods before training to determine those which feel most comfortable before exercise.

### **Tips for Pre-event Eating**

1. Eat a larger meal 2-4 hours prior to when you are likely to play, to allow time for your stomach to empty
2. Top up on small, high carbohydrate snacks and fluids between sessions and whilst waiting to play.
3. Eat enough food to feel comfortable - not overfull
4. Keep fat intake low - fat slows food emptying from the stomach
2. Make meals & snacks high in carbohydrate
3. Include nutritious carbohydrate rich foods - some players may find it useful to include low glycaemic index foods for prolonged energy levels (e.g. baked beans, multigrain bread, pasta, porridge, oranges) Include plenty of fluids. (water, sports drinks, juice)
4. Some players may feel more comfortable with a liquid meal (e.g. smoothie or Sustagen) prior to and between innings

## **What Should I Eat/Drink During Competition?**

- Players need to take advantage of the breaks between play to top up fuel and fluid stores
- High carbohydrate, low fat foods and fluids are the preferred choices although food selection will be up to the individual
- Good choices are low fat smoothies, rice, low fat yoghurt or ice cream, jelly and fruit, fruit salad, banana sandwich, muffins or crumpets with jam/honey, or pasta with plain sauce.
- At drinks and meal breaks, replacing fluid losses with a sports drink and water is a priority.

## **What About Recovery?**

- Ingesting carbohydrate within about 15 - 20 minutes after strenuous exercise can greatly facilitate the muscles ability to recover.
- It is important to plan for after long sessions of play, particularly when a player has been required to bowl many overs or make many runs.
- Organising to have carbohydrate rich foods and fluids as soon as practical after coming off the ground is a priority.
- Aiming for around 50-100g of high glycaemic index carbohydrate (see fact sheet on GI for more information) soon after finishing exercise is a good goal.
- Recovery foods may include smoothies, sports drink, icy poles muesli bars, sandwiches, soups and fruit.
- This should be followed by a nutritious meal containing both carbohydrate and protein.

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## Other Nutrition Tips

- The nutrition needs of individuals within a cricket team can vary considerably. Fast bowlers often have higher energy needs than batsmen and may have more difficulty maintaining a higher body weight.
- There can also be a lot of sitting and waiting in cricket which predisposes some players to excess weight and body fat levels, particularly if they are prone to boredom eating or consuming large quantities of soft drink.
- It is very important to be prepared on match days and ensure that nutritious and appropriate foods and fluids are available for snacks and meals throughout the day.
- There has historically been a strong association between cricket and alcohol (in particular beer). Cricket players at the elite level now recognise that excessive alcohol intake will impair performance and in particular their recovery between games. For this reason they restrict their intake of alcoholic beverages before and between games, and despite popular media interpretation, they also moderate their alcohol intake after matches.
- At any level of cricket, alcohol consumption close to a match should be avoided. At other times, players are encouraged to use alcohol in moderation only and to avoid 'binge drinking' situations.
- A multivitamin/mineral supplement may be indicated when travelling overseas to environments with unfamiliar foods and fluids, and/or extreme environmental conditions.
- To date there are no specific dietary supplements which have been proven to improve sporting performance in cricket players.

## How to Get Involved

- Click here for information about clubs all over the country  
[http://www.ants.com.au/cricket\\_clubs.htm](http://www.ants.com.au/cricket_clubs.htm)

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